

July 17, 2007

THIS WEEK'S BANNER OF HOPE ---

"It is a stronger and more fully human person who has suffered and overcome adversity than one who has never suffered at all".

Banners of Hope:

"Sharing Our Dreams," the 7th annual recovery day celebration, brought together people from the Central Vermont community and Lamoille County Mental Health. Focusing on work, spirituality, peer support, and hope, the 100 participants heard stories of personal recovery, listened to music by consumers and staff, worked on a group art project, and created Banners of Hope. Deputy Commissioner Michael Hartman felt the power of the banners that were displayed all over Montpelier's Bethany Church social hall and invited two of the event participants to meet with DMH staff. Kathy Perry and Zoe Bobar from Sunrise House brought the banners with them and shared their stories of the celebration and personal insights. The banners are on loan to DMH and now we all feel the power that generated the hope among those who celebrated their recovery that day with music, food, stories and entertainment.

DMH has hung up the Banners of Hope on the walls of our offices in the areas where they can be seen by visitors and staff alike. We will lead off each Mental Health Update with a quote from one of the banners until all have been shared with readers.

New Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner for Mental Health:

Agency of Human Services (AHS) Secretary Cynthia D. LaWare announced this week that Deputy Commissioner Michael Hartman is appointed as the Commissioner of the new Department of Mental Health (DMH). Secretary LaWare noted, "In his role as Deputy Commissioner, Michael Hartman has impressed policy makers, service providers and consumers alike with his wealth of experience and thoughtful, decisive leadership style. Michael was appointed Deputy Commissioner for Mental Health, in December, 2006, when Mental Health was under the Vermont Department of Health. Prior to that appointment, he served as Director of Community Rehabilitation and Treatment/Intensive Care Services at Washington County Mental Health Services, Inc. He was also the Executive Program Director of Collaborative Solutions Corporation, the new service provider that established Second Spring, an 11 bed Community Recovery Residential facility in Williamstown, Vermont earlier this year. Since 1998, he has been an Adjunct Faculty member of the Southern New Hampshire University Program in Community Mental Health, Burlington site. Michael has over 25-years of experience in the mental health and social work arena in Vermont. He received his BA from Goddard College in 1982 and his Masters in Social Work from the University of Vermont in 1998.

Secretary LaWare also appointed Beth Tanzman, Director of the Futures Project, as the Deputy Commissioner of Mental. Beth was described as a proven leader whose professional credentials, determination and patience have almost single-handedly kept the Vermont State Hospital Futures Project moving forward. Since November, 2005 she has directed the Vermont Mental Health Futures Project, a strategic planning process for the continued transformation of Vermont's public mental health system towards a consumer-directed, trauma-informed, and recovery-oriented system of mental health care. In this leadership role, Beth has worked collaboratively with all stakeholders in Vermont's mental health system to replace the existing 54-bed inpatient capacity of the Vermont State Hospital (VSH) with a new array of inpatient, rehabilitation, and residential services for adults. Prior to this, she served as director of Vermont's Adult Community Mental Health Services where she was a key leader in Vermont's mental health system change efforts. Before working for the State of Vermont, Tanzman was a consultant and researcher with the Center for Community Change through Housing and Support. Beth served as Chair of the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD) Adult Services Division (2000-2002) and is active in the national Evidence-Based Practices research and implementation. She received her BA from the University of Vermont in 1984 and her Masters in Social Work from State University of New York, Albany in 1988.

DMH staff members welcome and enthusiastically endorse these leadership selections who will guide the transformation and development of the new Department of Mental Health Services.

FUTURES

Allocation of Recovery Housing Funds:

Given input from the VSH Futures Housing Development work group, final recommendations of the VSH Futures Advisory Committee, and interested stakeholder participation, the Department of Mental Health has finalized a methodology that best reflects the identified priority needs for allocating the FY 08 recovery housing funds. One-half of the total allocation of \$460,500.00 will be distributed equally among the ten Designated Agencies. The remaining one-half allocation will be distributed based upon Designated Agency hospital utilization rates for FY07. The current planned distribution considered existing housing resources available to mental health consumers, existing capacity and demand of programs, and ways to improve availability of housing for consumers. A summary of the contributors to the feedback process and recommended uses for funding is available at the Mental Health website.

Agencies Respond to Crisis Beds RFP:

Five Designated Agencies submitted letters of intent to propose new crisis stabilization beds in their communities. This begins Round II of the review process to develop project applications that are responsive to the criteria and goals of the RFP. Applicants have until September 7th to submit written proposals. Once ruled complete, DMH will post applications on the Web site and begin the public comment period to include a public hearing. A DMH-appointed review panel will make recommendations to the mental health commissioner who will select proposals and grant Certificates of Approval.

HowardCenter, Counseling Service of Addison County, Lamoille County Mental Health, Clara Martin Center and Rutland Mental Health Services submitted letters of intent. They are posted on the Web site.

Expansion of Vermont's crisis bed capacity was identified in the Futures Plan and further studied by a work group of the Futures Advisory Committee in 2006. Two agencies, Northeast Kingdom Human Services and Northwest Counseling and Support Services, were first to receive project approval to implement two-bed programs. These four new beds will bring the current 18 crisis beds up to 22 beds. Round II, now underway, will add an additional 4 crisis beds to the mental health system of care, improving geographic access and emergency services to help prevent unnecessary hospitalizations.

VERMONT INTEGRATED SERVICES INITIATIVE - (VISI)

News:

VISI is please to welcome two new partners to its Initiative, Washington County Mental Health and the Community Health Center of Burlington.

VISI is using the DDCAT, (Dual Diagnosis Capability In Addition Treatment) fidelity tool developed by Dr. Mark McGovern at Dartmouth to assess program capability in providing co-occurring mental health and substance abuse services and is piloting and adapting the tool for primary care settings and settings that focus on outreach and referral for people experiencing homelessness. The DDCAT evaluates 35 program elements that are subdivided into 7 dimensions to the general organizational factors that foster or inhibit the treatment of COD to the training and supports that facilitate the capacity of staff to treat co-occurring conditions.

Meetings:

On July 20 at 9:30 a.m., there will a workforce development committee meeting at the Cyprian Center in Waterbury.

On July 27 at 2 :00, there will be a Financial Planning Committee meeting. This meeting will focus on reimbursement strategies for people with co-occurring conditions. This meeting is done via telephone conference

On August 2 from 11:30 to 2:00, there will be a Clinical Practices Committee meeting. The meeting location will be announced at a later time.

Please join us for our third VISI Steering Committee meeting on August 10 from 9 am to 1:30 pm at the Langevin House on the Vermont Technical Center's campus in Randolph. Dr. Ken Minkoff will assist the Steering Committee in its continuing efforts to embed integrated services for people with co-occurring conditions throughout the entire system of care.

To connect to these meetings or to join the committee please contact:

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Change in Weekly Mental Health Update :

Beginning this week, the Department of Mental Health Update will be issued every two weeks with a focus on including more department-wide informational updates from Children's and Adult Mental Health, Vermont State Hospital, the Futures Initiative, and the Vermont Integrated Services Initiative (VISI), and other pertinent Department undertakings or accomplishments. The mailing list will also be updated to promote a broader readership of the expanded content as well. The next DMH update will be July 31st. Please contact ppalmer@vdh.state.vt.us if you have groups, organizations, or individuals to recommend for the expanded mailing list.

VERMONT STATE HOSPITAL CENSUS

The Vermont State Hospital Census was 47 as of midnight Monday night. The average census for the past 45 days was 47.